

Horse and buggy era remembered

The 'good old days' are very real to York County's David Posey

By DIETER KRIEG

AIRVILLE - "Would you be happy farming today, Mr. Posey?" "Oh my, yes!" the 83-year-old retired farmer replied instantly. "I'd love to be able to farm - I'd have a garden if I was able."

Now limited in his activities due to age and diabetes, David Posey was a hard-working farmer and businessman in southern York County until his retirement. But, as is true of so many who "retire," a flame keeps on flickering in his heart - illuminating memories of a life style which has faded away, and warming desires for a career which is changing rapidly. He loved his work, says he, lived an interesting and enjoyable life, and appreciates his blessings.

Enthusiastic about modern agriculture, and yet fond of "the good old days," Posey's recollections of farm life 50 years ago are somewhat inspirational. He remembers following a horse-drawn, one-bottom plow from "sun to sun" when he was only 10 years old. "The plow would jump all around and fall right out of my hands sometimes," he chuckled. Farming was a way of life for his family and he quickly became accustomed to the work. "I've always worked - never knew anything else," he said. "But we weren't too busy to visit each other and have a good time. People were happy. Now you never see your neighbors. We used to get together to play cards and eat apple pie," he reminisced. "We had good times" he laughed, "people weren't afraid to work."

Mechanization and specialization have made farming easier, but they haven't contributed to people having more time for each other; or encouraged members of a community to work together more closely to pursue common goals. These facts bother the aging Posey a little, especially since he can vividly remember what life was like in the early 1900's.

One of 12 children born to Jacob Posey, a farmer, justice of the peace, school teacher, and builder all rolled into one, Posey and his seven sisters and four brothers helped on their father's farm since before their age was recorded in two digits.

"My Dad's monthly salary for teaching school was \$15, and the school term only lasted five months," Posey said, leaving no further need to explain why his father was into so many professions.

The family of 14 tried to be as self-sufficient as possible - with every member of the household contributing to the cause. Posey's sisters worked in the fields the



David Posey, 83, is convinced that belief in God and plenty of hard work are the keys to success and happiness.

same as men, and much of what was raised was primarily used at home. One beef animal and 10 hogs were killed each year to eliminate the need to buy meat, while several cows provided milk and butter. The sale of wheat was the only direct cash income from the farm.

Other crops raised on the 110-acre (70 tillable) farm near the west bank of the Susquehanna River, overlooking Holtwood Dam, were either fed to livestock or paid to the landlord as part of the rent. Ten horses and mules annually consumed whatever hay was harvested from 40 acres, as well as

day," he said, punctuating the statement with a short, snappy motion of his head. "And then, when I'd take the team in for lunch, I had to pump water for them by hand." He chuckled as he continued: "They drank water to make you think there was no end to it!"

Seeding and harvesting methods of 50 years ago are also remembered by the veteran farmer, who in more recent years owned and operated several hundred acres. Most of the farming techniques of half a century ago have been abandoned, but not forgotten by

nowadays. Wheat sold for about 60 cents a bushel and to have a horse shod cost the farmer a dollar.

Married to the former Clara Taylor in 1916, Posey moved to a farm at Woodbine three years later and concentrated on making a living as a farmer. With a wife and eight children to support, making a living off the farm sometimes became a real chore in more ways than one.

"You couldn't make a nickle in farming during the Great Depression," Posey grimaced, adding that he went to work in a furniture factory for four years. In

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about half the corn crop. "Each one received about six or seven ears per day and all the hay it could eat," Posey remembered. A mixture of chaff and bran was also a part of their diet.

Cows, on the other hand, never received hay. Their main staple was corn fodder. None of the milk was sold since the family was large enough to use all of it themselves. The girls did the milking, Posey said.

A typical day during the "good old days," which are very real to Posey, started at about 6 a.m. The first order of business was to feed, curry, and harness the teams which were to be used in field work after breakfast, which was at 7 o'clock. With a sparkle in his eye, and a note of excitement in his voice, the amiable Posey fondly recalls the horse and buggy era.

"Two acres was a day's plowing; and I'd walk behind the plow all

men like Posey. An example of a practice which is seldom seen today is cultivating corn in a checkered pattern. Going through the field in perpendicular directions resulted in better weed control, according to Posey.

Cradling and shocking wheat was a common practice during Posey's boyhood, and was still in use in later years wherever a farmer couldn't maneuver in a field without running the crops down.

Hay making techniques changed rapidly once the side-delivery rake and loader came into being about 50 years ago, Posey observed. Manure was hauled out on a wagon for quite a few years even after the mechanically operated spreader had been invented because "\$100 for a spreader was a lot of money during those days." Seed corn was obtained from fields at home, rather than purchased as it's done

addition to his work at the farm, he also kept himself busy with community projects helping to build roads, a school, a church, and cut poles for power lines. He noted that his community received electric service during the mid-1920's.

It was 1925 before Posey purchased his first tractor, an F-12 made by International Harvester. "It was a good little tractor," he commented, showing no regret over the fact that hoof power was being replaced by piston power. "The tractor would plow five acres a day, and we didn't have to get a team ready or put it away - no currying, feeding and harnessing - we could go to town then," he said happily. Gasoline was priced at 10 cents per gallon.

Although his formal education came to a halt when he reached age 10, Posey says he's never stopped learning and displays a keen interest in the world around

him, particularly agriculture. Aside from him being active in farming and community projects, he also sold silos for a number of years and was knowledgeable enough about surveying to have made a career of it.

The work he did wasn't easy, but Posey says he never minded it. "I liked the work and liked to labor - I wish I could work yet. I hate to sit around with my hands folded," he said emphatically. With long hours, and many manual chores, one would tend to think that there was little time for recreation. But according to Posey, people got together more often than they do now, and there was time for fun and games.

Sunday was the "big day" for leisure, but not until after church. "We'd walk on rail fences to see how far we could go without falling off, swing in trees, fight bumblebees, wrestle, and play baseball," he remarked.

A man with strong religious convictions, Posey is as aware and appreciative of his blessings as the earlier generations of Poseys who first settled in Maryland in the 17th century. According to family records, the first of the Poseys to settle in America was Francois Poschet. Leaving his native France because of religious persecution, he came to these shores in 1637 by way of England, where his name was changed to Francis Posey. He is proud of his heritage and points out that some of his ancestors are mentioned in George Washington's personal diary (March 17, 1760). His great-great grandmother, Rachel Posey, made bread and knit socks for soldiers at Valley Forge.

When asked what he believes is most important in life, and what advice he might have for younger people, Posey unhesitatingly answered: "The church comes first, and everything that goes with the church." Beyond that, he considers plenty of hard work to be the key towards success and happiness. Looking back on his own "ups and downs," he says he can't understand why people complain so much today and asks: "Why can't they appreciate what has been provided? Give credit where it belongs - to the Lord."

Modern farming has as much appeal to him as the "good old days," and he's confident that new innovations and trends are heading in the right direction. There's no doubt in his mind, for example, that specialization is for the better.

If there's one thing about the horse and buggy days which he really misses today, then it's the time people had for each other, and the fact that they were never afraid to work.

Farm & Home Center slates annual meeting



Darvin Boyd

LANCASTER - The annual meeting of the Farm and Home Foundation of Lancaster County will be held January 29, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Farm and Home Center, here. Advance reservations are necessary and should be made no later than Jan. 23.

This year's guest speaker is Darvin E. Boyd, Akron, associate legislative research analyst for the Minority Caucus of the House of Representatives at Harrisburg.

A former director of Korea's 4-H program, he will be presenting his speech, entitled "Challenge of

Commitment at Home and Abroad," from a background of personal commitment and experience.

As a youth, Boyd was one of Lancaster County's most outstanding 4-H members, with many state and local awards to his credit. He is a 1964 graduate of Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture, with a BS in animal husbandry, and in 1966 earned a master of public administration degree from Penn State. In 1964 he went to Korea under the IFYE program.

As director of the American Korean Foundation's 4-H program from

1966 to 1972, Boyd was honored many times by the Korean government.

After returning to Lancaster County in 1972, Boyd became executive director of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives committee on health and welfare. His work in Harrisburg continues as the associate legislative research analyst for the minority caucus of the House.

Another feature of the January 29 program will be a showing of Colonial fashions by Lancaster County Farm Women Societies. Music will be provided by Gloria Longenecker, the reigning

Miss Lancaster County.

There will also be reports from Foundation president Jay Landis, treasurer George Lewis and building manager Howard Campbell. The brief business meeting at the end of the program will include the election of seven new directors.

Since it opened in the spring of 1968, nearly half-a-million people have attended a broad variety of functions at the Farm and Home Center. In addition to the Center itself, the Farm and Home Foundation operates a scholarship fund to assist college bound Lancaster County youths who are

aiming at careers in home economics, agriculture or nursing.

Tickets for the meeting are available, at \$4.50 each, from Foundation directors, or from Howard Campbell at the Farm and Home Center. Checks should be made payable to the "Farm and Home Foundation" and mailed to: 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, Pa. 17601.

Halfway out from the center of our galaxy—the Milky Way—is our solar system. Nine planets revolve around the sun. Our solar system may be only one of millions in the universe.